REMARKS

By this amendment, claims 3 and 4 have been cancelled, claim 1 has been amended, and claims 5-10 have been added. Thus, claims 1, 2 and 5-10 are now active in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Minor amendments to the specification and abstract have been made in order to correct various editorial and idiomatic errors. No new matter has been added by such amendments.

On page 2 of the Office Action, the drawings were objected to because reference numeral 18 was included in the drawings but not mentioned in the description. However, the description on page 4 of the specification (i.e., the paragraph beginning at line 21 of page 4) has been corrected to refer to --elastic material 18-- instead of "elastic material 16." Therefore, it is submitted that this objection has been obviated.

Next, on pages 2-4 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art (Fig. 5) in view of Ney (U.S. 4,047,756); and claims 2 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art (Fig. 5) and Ney in view of Hendrickson (U.S. 3,220,767). These rejections are clearly inapplicable to the claims as now presented, for the following reasons.

With exemplary reference to the drawing figures, claim 1 now sets forth a seat structure comprising: a seat frame 4; a three-dimensional net 10 stretched over the seat frame 4; a skin material 12 covering a part of the three-dimensional net 10; and a fastener 24 for selectively releasably connecting a portion of the skin material 12 and the three-dimensional net 10 so as to connect the portion of the skin material 12 to the three-dimensional net 10 while the skin material 12 is covering said part of the three-dimensional net 10, and so as to disconnect the portion of the skin material 12 from the three-dimensional net 10 while the skin material 12 is covering said part of the three-dimensional net 10, surface rigidity of the skin material 12 being higher when the fastener 24 connects the portion of the skin material 12 to the three-dimensional

net 10 than when the fastener 24 does not connect the portion of the skin material 12 to the three-dimensional net 10.

Thus, according to the present invention as recited in claim 1, the skin material 12 cover a part of the three-dimensional net 10, as illustrated in Figs. 1, 3A and 3B, and the fastener 24 provides for selectively releasably connecting the skin material 12 to the three-dimensional net 10. Specifically, according to claim 1, the fastener 24 is selectively releasably connecting the skin material and the three-dimensional net so as to connect the skin material 12 to the three-dimensional net 10 while the skin material 12 is covering the three-dimensional net 10 (as shown in Fig. 3A), and so as to disconnect the skin material 12 from the three-dimensional net 10 while the skin material 12 is covering the three-dimensional net 10 (as shown in Fig. 3B). It is further specified in claim 1 that surface rigidity of the skin material 12 is higher when the fastener 24 connects the skin material 12 to the three-dimensional net 10 (as shown in Fig. 3A) than when the fastener 24 does not connect the skin material 12 to the three-dimensional net 10 (as shown in Fig. 3B).

Thus, in both situations where the fastener 24 connects the skin material 12 to the three-dimensional net 10, and when the fastener 24 does not connect the skin material 12 to the three-dimensional net 10, the skin material 12 remains in a covering relation to the three-dimensional net 10 (as shown in Figs. 1, 3A and 3B). The fastener 24 is not used for the purpose of removing the skin material 12 from a covering relation with the three-dimensional net 10, but is rather used to connect a portion of the skin material 12 to the three-dimensional net 10 which is covered by the skin material 12 (as shown in Fig. 3A) or to disconnect the skin material 12 from the three-dimensional net 12 while the skin material 12 remains covering the three-dimensional net 10 (as shown in Fig. 3B), as recited in claim 1.

In contrast to the present invention of claim 1, and as recognized by the Examiner, although the prior art of present Fig. 5 discloses a seat structure including a seat frame, a three-dimensional net stretched over the seat frame, and a skin material, it does not disclose the use of a fastener for connecting a portion of the skin material with the three-dimensional net.

The Examiner cited the Ney patent for teaching "a seat cover for having a back portion (15) fastened to a side portion (17) by a slide fastener chain (16) in order to allow the cover to fit snugly into position over the chair portions." However, the Ney patent discloses a seat construction having a pair of slide fastener chains 16, which are used to separably join a front fly 14 and a back fly 15 of the seat cover 16 in order to install or remove the seat cover. The Ney patent does not, however, disclose or suggest providing a fastener to selectively releasably connect a portion of a skin material and a three-dimensional net of a seat so as to connect the skin material to the three-dimensional net while the skin material is covering the three-dimensional net, and so as to disconnect the skin material from the three-dimensional net while the skin material is covering the three-dimensional net, as required by claim 1.

The Examiner cited the Hendrickson patent for teaching "a chair comprising the use of cushioning material (40) for use inside the seat cover (16)". However, the Hendrickson patent provides no teaching or suggestion that would have obviated the above-discussed shortcomings of the admitted prior art (Fig. 5) and the Ney patent.

Accordingly, in view of the above-discussed clear distinctions between the present invention of present claim 1 and the admitted prior art shown in Fig. 5 and the Ney patent, it is believed to be apparent that the features required by independent claim 1 are not disclosed or suggested in any of the prior art of record. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that a person having ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to modify the admitted prior art of Fig. 5 in view of the Ney patent or to make any combination of the references of record in such a manner as to result in or otherwise render obvious the present invention of claim 1. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1, as well as claims 3-10 which depend therefrom, are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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